

**Pawtuxet River Authority
And Watershed Council
Historic Harris Mill
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www.pawtuxet.org**

**Monthly Board Meeting
January 5, 2009**

Board Members Present: Robert Nero, Jack Donovan, Jim McCaughey, Glenn Warfield, Jack Lancellotta, Brian Manning, Fritz Benz, Rita Holahan

Location: Coventry Town Hall

Board Members Absent: Ross Adrain, Michael Maddalena, Ginny Leslie, Scott Goodinson (excused), Paul Lockett, Arthur Langlais

Guest: Ron Holloway

1. Call to Order

Noting that a quorum was present Chairman Nero called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM. Discussion took place regarding needed changes to the December minutes. The December minutes were accepted noting required changes all in favor.

2. Action Items

PRA Short and Long Term Planning

DEM Building on Warwick Ave

Fritz stated that he and Rita met with Michael Sullivan, RIDEM Director regarding the Warwick Ave. Building. Mr. Sullivan stated that he would like to see PRA's plans for the building and if the property could not be sold then RIDEM may consider giving the property to the PRA.

Rita went on to say that RIDEM is now appraising the property and will go forward in about six months with putting the property on the market. In order for the PRA to make an offer on the property the RIDEM will specifically need to know what plans the PRA has for utilizing the property, what kinds of educational programs may be held there, and whether or not the PRA will rent out portions of the property. Fritz stated that because the property is often "flooded" there are limits to the use of the property. Bob Nero stated that the PRA has historically planned to use the property as an educational site. Rita stated that the RIDEM will need to know where the PRA is going to get the funding needed to make needed upgrades and will need to see PRA plans for this property through to completion. Fritz stated that the PRA needs to put together the best "package" possible and talk to other organizations to see what their interests are. Friends of the Pawtuxet, Save-the-Lakes, RI Bass Federation, and RICA may also be interested in utilizing this property. Rita stated that if the PRA has a convincing campaign in place we could be in a good position to obtain this property. Fritz stated that Mr. Sullivan was very interested in having the PRA utilize this property if funding and plans can be put into place.

Bob Nero posed the question “Is the PRA prepared to go forward with taking over and developing this property?” Bob pointed out that the PRA will need staff to manage the property, funds for insurance and upkeep and will need to be fully committed to managing this property. Fritz stated that the PRA needs a Long Term/Short Term Plan that focuses on finishing various on-going projects. Bob Nero stated the PRA has a number of on-going projects that require attention and that we need to identify and prioritize each of these projects. Fritz pointed out that any organization that meets only once a month cannot accomplish much and that the PRA should begin meeting on developing a Long Term/Short Term Plan between monthly meetings. Discussion took place regarding holding meetings of the two Standing Committees.

Rita asked if any additional information has come forward regarding the PRA office at the Harris Mill. Bob Nero stated that no new information has come forward from the property receiver but conversely we have also not received any notice or indication that we will be asked to vacate the office. Fritz asked if we should consider a temporary storage location for PRA property currently at the Harris Mill. Jack Donovan stated that an 8x12 storage area costs about \$60/month. Glenn suggested using the Veterans Square Shed – Bob Nero stated that it is full to capacity and went on to say the best solution may be a storage container. Fritz asked if any of the towns have space that can be utilized. Fritz suggested talking to Veolia about utilizing some space for the PRA.

Pontiac Canoe Launch

Bob Nero stated that all grant paperwork associated with the Canoe Launch Project has been submitted to the RIDOT. Bob said that the RIDOT informed him that the PRA must first make the required payments to the contractor and that we can then get reimbursed through the grant. Bob stated that he is having conversations with the City of Warwick about having them make the interim contractor payments. Bob stated that Janine Burke, the Warwick WWTF Executive Director offered to work with the PRA to get the needed funds through the City of Warwick. Bob also brought up the possibility of taking out a line of credit from a bank to make this payment. Fritz made a motion that Bob approach the Centerville bank regarding taking out a line of credit. The motion was seconded by Glenn – all in favor.

Rita recommended that the PRA set a date in June 2009, which is Rivers Month, to hold a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Howard Property. Fritz asked if we could have the contractor plant some grass at the site. Bob stated the project has about \$4,000 remaining in budgeted funds and that it could be used for additional landscaping and the construction of a fence at the property. Jack Donovan asked about the number of participants to be expected at the Ribbon Cutting. Rita stated that we will send out numerous invitations to potential private and corporate sponsors, property neighbors, environmental advocates, and public officials to name a few.

Pawtuxet Falls Dam

Bob stated that the PRA may not own the entire dam, however, plans to modify the dam focus on the portion of the dam that is definitely owned by the PRA. Bob will conduct further investigation into this situation. The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program has the lead on this project.

Spring Clean-Ups

Bob stated that he put together a schedule of clean-up activities and circulated it to the Board Members. Rita stated that we should work with Friend’s of the Pawtuxet to help identify “hot” locations. Bob mentioned that we have been asked to do some clean-up work in the Thornton area of the Pocasset River.

3. Chairman's Report

Annual Report

Bob stated that the report is almost ready. Rita stated that she is working on a "brief" water quality section for the report that can be expanded upon at a later date. Rita pointed out that the main stem of the Pawtuxet River has been "de-listed" for low oxygen levels. Bob stated that the PRA has about \$450 in the treasury. Bob also stated that the PRA will be receiving a \$1,000 rebate from our insurance company.

Howard Property

Bob stated that we are looking at obtaining \$30,000 from identified Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) and is looking into obtaining Supplementary Enforcement Project (SEP) funds from RIDEM. These funds will be used to have a survey conducted and a Phase I and II environmental assessment done.

Riverwalk Property

Two title companies have concluded that we own four parcels of Riverwalk property but probably do not own the "Cranston" property. Once funds are available the PRA will obtain title insurance on these parcels. Discussion took place regarding these properties their location and historic and current conditions.

Towns of Scituate and West Warwick Payments

Bob stated that the PRA lawyer is pursuing both the Scituate and West Warwick cases.

4. New Business

Stormwater Management

Jack Lancelotta talked about piece a property in West Warwick impacted by stormwater. Jack and Glenn will follow-up on this issue. Fritz offered to have his son speak to the PRA on this issue. Bob Nero mentioned that the Center of New England has a 445 acre site that has an on-going stormwater management issue. Jack Donovan will be looking into talking with various organizations/individuals that have historic knowledge of the site and may have information on locations of former ponds and water bodies on the property.

Harris Property

Bob mentioned that the Town of Coventry is planning on upgrading their property into a park adjacent to the Harris Dam. Bob recommended that the PRA collaborate with the town on this project. Bob stated that Jack Donovan will arrange for a meeting with the Coventry's Park and Recreation Director.

Ross Adrian

Bob mentioned that Ross Adrian has not been showing up to PRA Board Meeting. Jack and Glenn will follow-up.

Planning Committee Meeting

Fritz stated that a tentative date of Thursday January 22nd has been selected for a meeting. Additional information will be sent out regarding a location and time.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.